

Director's Remarks January 2010

Performance in December

Circulation continues to rise in the branches but the growth is leveling out rather than expanding with the fresh expenditure of funds under new budget priorities. Also, for the first time in eight years, we lost more expiring cardholders than we gained in new users. In that all the reapportionment of funds has gone into the most popular areas, this slowdown in growth is troubling. One thing is clear. Now is a very good time to roll out new marketing that will publicize the changes we have been making and improvements on the horizon.

New Mission Statement, Logo, and Tagline

Brian May and his staff developed new versions of logos based on the "Public Library" brand name endorsed by the Library Board in December. David Turner, Mary Lou, Mai Bell, Kim Fahs (Friends chair 2010), Andria, and I reviewed and selected what we believe to be the best design and one alternative. Following a full board vote, we need to move quickly drafting a plan for meaningful change that we can carry to funding sources.

If this upgrade included automation, there is the possibility that UTC might join with us on a grant request in documenting the many community improvements to services and efficiency that would result. Now is the time to move on this because of our need to submit a budget in March and UTC's need to focus on their new library building in a few months. Our next opportunity to partner may not come until 2012 (i.e. after they have finished the move into the new building)

Matching Funds, Capital Funds, & Next Year's Budget

Commissioner Hullander has agreed to give us \$4,000 to help at the Ooltewah/Collegedale Library. This is in addition to the \$19,000 already given by Commissioners Brooks, and Coppinger. However, the City Council voted not to use City Contingency funds to match the \$19,000 already received from the County. Council members Benson, Robinson, and Rico were the only ones voting to support the match.

Also, the City's new five-year plan for capital expenditures does not include any Library projects. We need to start work now with City and County representatives if we expect any improvements next year. We will schedule a meeting of the Library Board Finance Committee as soon as possible so that the full board will have the February and, I hope, the March meetings to discuss alternatives.

Payment to Lyrasis (formerly Solinet) – (Board approval needed)

Each year the Library replenishes our account with the multi-state cooperative (Lyrasis) that supports shared cataloging with 71,000 libraries world-wide and the publication of our catalog on the web (Worldcat). This \$20,000 annual payment is a line item covered in the budget approved by the Library Board. Solinet recently merged with two other cooperatives to form Lyrasis, which now serves New England, Middle-Atlantic, and South-eastern states. Paul Page blocked payment through City Purchasing until we get specific Library Board approval for this annual replenishment of funds .